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Programme budget implications of draft resolution E/2012/L.24 entitled "Report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights"

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-seventh session in November 2011, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reiterated its concern at the persisting backlog of reports awaiting consideration. For that reason, the Committee has requested, in the form of a draft decision in its annual report (E/2012/22), one additional week per session during the period 2013-2014, as well as an increase in the composition of the pre-sessional working group (up to 10 members instead of the current five).

2. It is recalled that the same concern was expressed in the Committee's report on its forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions (E/2011/22). By its decision 2011/279, the Economic and Social Council decided to further defer its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on those sessions until the 2012 substantive session of the Council. The present statement of programme budget implications is submitted in connection with the provisions of draft resolution E/2012/L.24 in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council.

II. Requests contained in the draft resolution

3. Under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution E/2012/L.24, the Economic and Social Council would decide to approve as a temporary measure, and without prejudice to the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the extension of the second annual session of 2013 of the Committee

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by one week and the first annual session of 2014 by one week, for a total of two extra weeks of meeting time, to be used for the consideration of reports of the States parties with a view to reducing the backlog, and approve the participation of up to 10 members of the Committee in both pre-sessional working group meetings in 2013, in order to prepare for the consideration of extra reports.

III. Relationship of the requests relating to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013

4. The activities to be carried out relate to Programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, Part B, Conference Services, Geneva; subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights treaty bodies, of Programme 19, Human rights, of the strategic framework for the period 2012-2013. They also fall under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 24, Human rights; and section 29E, Administration, Geneva, of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 and of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

5. Provisions have been made in the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 for travel and per diem costs of the 18 members of the Committee to attend its two annual regular sessions of 15 working days each and, following each session, a five-day pre-session working group meeting of five members, as well as for substantive conference and support services to the Committee and the pre-session working group.

IV. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

6. Provision of additional resources called for in the draft resolution, referred to in paragraph 3 above, would allow the Committee to consider a greater number of reports. At present, approximately 45 reports are pending consideration by the Committee. With the present Secretariat support, the Committee considers approximately 10 reports per year, spread over two sessions. An average of 18 new reports are received each year for consideration by the Committee. As a result, the Committee's backlog is not diminishing. The average time between the receipt of a report and its consideration by the Committee amounts to four years. The additional meeting time and related additional resources, requested in the draft resolution, would allow the Committee to consider approximately six additional reports per year.

7. Should the Economic and Social Council approve draft resolution E/2012/L.24, additional general temporary assistance resources would be required to provide for one P-3 position for six months, including four months in 2013 and two months in 2014. That entails research and analysis, assisting the Committee with the drafting of lists of issues and concluding observations, taking into account the jurisprudence of the Committee as well as of other international and regional bodies, assistance to the Committee's rapporteur, finalization of the final text as appropriate, and follow-up as required, as well as servicing the meetings of the respective Committee's session.

8. Additional documentation would be also required over the two-year period, comprising a total of an estimated 760 additional pages of pre-session and 90 pages of in-session documentation in the working languages of the Committee, and 90 pages of post-session documentation, respectively, in the official languages of the Committee, spread over the two sessions during 2013 and 2014.

9. The additional meeting time would not incur additional travel costs; however, an additional daily subsistence allowance for 18 members for an additional week would be required. Furthermore, a daily subsistence allowance would also be required for five additional participants in the pre-sessional working group, which currently consists of five members.

V. Estimated resource requirements

Conference-servicing requirements

10. It is estimated that additional conference-servicing requirements of $1,122,300 would arise, including $1,116,500 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and $5,800 under section 29E, Administration, Geneva, of which: (a) the amount of $817,000 for 2013, including $814,100 under section 2 and $2,900 under section 29E, would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013; and (b) the amount of $305,300 for 2014, including $302,400 under section 2 and $2,900 under section 29E, would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

Non-conference-servicing requirements

11. It is estimated that a provision for general temporary assistance, equivalent to four work-months at the P-3 level, including $61,500 for 2013 and $30,800 for 2014, would be required. The amount of $61,500 would be required under section 24, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013, while the remaining provision for two months, amounting to $30,800, would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

12. The additional amount of $69,300 per year would be required for a daily subsistence allowance of 18 Committee members for an additional week per session. The amount of $38,500 would be also required for a daily subsistence allowance of five additional members to participate in both pre-sessional working group meetings in 2013. Consequently, the amount of $107,800 would be required under section 24, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013, while the 2014 provision, amounting to $69,300, would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

13. In addition, an amount of $8,700, including $5,800 for 2013 and $2,900 for 2014, would be required under section 37, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

14. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt draft resolution E/2012/L.24, the total additional requirements relating to the additional workload to eliminate a backlog of 12 reports cases would amount to $1,391,700, enumerated in the table below. The amount of $986,300 for 2013 would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. The amount of $405,400 to provide for the

2014 requirements would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

	2012	*2014*	*Total*
	(United States dollars)		
Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management			
Interpretation	58 300	58 300	116 600
Processing of documentation	755 800	244 100	999 900
Total	**814 100**	**302 400**	**1 116 500**
Section 24, Human rights			
General temporary assistance (6 months at P-3 level)	61 500	30 800	92 300
DSA for 18 members for an additional week per session	69 300	69 300	138 600
DSA for 5 additional members for one week pre-session twice in 2013	38 500		38 500
Total	**169 300**	**100 100**	**269 400**
Section 29E, Administration, Geneva			
Support services requirements	2 900	2 900	5 800
Total	**2 900**	**2 900**	**5 800**
Grand total	**986 300**	**405 400**	**1 391 700**

VI. Potential for absorption

15. No provisions to finance the above additional resource requirements of $986,300 for 2013 have been included under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013, and it is not anticipated that those requirements could be met from within the resources of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

16. Consequently, should the Council adopt draft resolution E/2012/L.24, an additional appropriation of $986,300, including $814,100 under section 2, $169,300 under section 24 and $2,900 under section 29E, would be required over and above the resources approved for the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

VII. Contingency fund

17. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditure were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing

activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

18. It is not possible, at this stage, to identify activities under sections 2, 24 and 29E of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 that could be curtailed, deferred, terminated or modified in order to meet the net additional requirement of $986,300. Although absorption is not foreseen at this time, the Secretariat will seek, over the coming months, to identify areas from which further resources can be redeployed to meet the requirements for the Committee in the biennium 2012-2013 and will inform the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session accordingly in the context of the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2012.

VIII. Summary

19. Should the Economic and Social Council adopt draft resolution E/2012/L.24, additional resource requirements in the total amount of $986,300 for 2013 would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013, including $814,100 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, $169,300 under section 24, Human rights, and $2,900 under section 29E, Administration, Geneva, of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. The amount of $405,400 for 2014 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

20. Additional amount of $8,700, including $5,800 for 2013 and $2,900 for 2014, would be also required under section 37, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.